

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02  
SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-05 MCT-01 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00  
/089 W

-----023431 040141Z /70

R 031700Z OCT 77  
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5092  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 6241

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: MARR, SY  
SUBJ: REACTIONS TO US-SOVIET ME COMMUNIQUE

1. AMERICAN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR AT MFA, SHOUFFE SAID THAT  
GENERAL REACTION IN SYRIA TO US-SOVIET COMMUNIQUE WAS  
POSITIVE EVEN THOUGH THERE WAS SUSPICION THAT SOVIETS HAD  
GIVEN UP MORE THAN AMERICANS SINCE THERE WAS NO MENTION  
TO PLO OR TOTAL WITHDRAWAL. SPECULATION WAS THAT USSR  
WON CONCESSIONS IN OTHER AREAS, I. E. SALT IN RETURN FOR  
MIDDLE EAST CONCESSIONS. SYRIA NOTED POSITIVELY, ACCORDING  
TO SHOUFI, THE ABSENCE OF ANY MENTION OF UNSC RES. 242.  
H COMMENTED THAT THE COMMUNIQUE SOUNDED VERY CLOSE TO  
WHAT SECRETARY VANCE TOLD THE SYRIANS DURING HIS AUGUST  
VISIT. MORE IMPORTANT THAN SUBSTANCE OF US-  
SOVIET STATEMENT SHUFI COMMENTED, WAS FACT THAT TWO  
SUPER-POWERS HAD STAKED OUT COMMON GROUND ON MIDDLE EAST QUESTION  
AND MIGHT BE PREPARING TO "SLIGHTLY IMPOSE" SOLUTION WHICH WOULD  
HELP BOTH ARABS AND ISRAELIS WHO UNABLE TO MAKE  
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CONCESSIONS FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL REASONS.

2. SYRIAN MEDIA OCT 2 AND 3 WERE DOMINATED BY REPORTING  
OF US-SOVIET COMMUNIQUE AND ARAB AND ISRAELI REACTIONS.  
HEADLINES HIGHLIGHTED "RESTRAINED ARAB WELCOME" AND "ISRAELI  
REJECTION. AL-BAATH SAID: "AMERICAN-SOVIET COMMUNIQUE  
EXPEDITES CONVENING OF GENEVA CONFERENCE." NEWS ARTICLES

COVERED FULL RANGE OF REACTIONS INCLUDING ISRAEL'S LAMENTATION AND JORDAN'S UPBEAT STATEMENT WELCOMING COMMUNIQUE. THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL, AND PRACTICALLY NO UNOFFICIAL, SYRIAN REACTION, AND PRESS DOES NOT REFLECT ANY CLEARCUT CHANGE IN OFFICIAL GUIDANCE ON COVERAGE OF US OR MIDDLE EAST. THERE HAS BEEN NOTABLE ABSENCE OF EDITORIAL COMMENT DIRECTLY ON COMMUNIQUE. ACCORDING TO AP STRINGER, MININFO SOURCE CHARACTERIZED STATEMENT AS "MODERATELY POSITIVE."

3. ONLY ONE EDITORIAL, IN SUNDAY'S THAWRA, HAS DELT WITH THE US-SOVIET COMMUNIQUE. THE EDITORIAL CLAIMS THAT THE SOVIET VEIW HAS BEEN LONG KNOWN TO THE ARABS. THUS, THE COMMUNIQUE ONLY HAS VALUE AS CONFIRMATION THAT THE AMERICAN ATTITUDE IS IN HARMONY WITH THE LOGIC OF A JUST PEACE. BUT, WARNS THE EDITORIAL, SLIPPING BACK INTO THE STANDARE PRESS THEME OF LATE, THE US HAS NOT COMPELLED ISRAEL TO ACCEPT THIS ATTITUDE. IT CONCLUDES WITH THE HOPE THAT THE US WILL , IN LIGHT OF THIS STATEMENT, COMPEL ISRAEL TO YEILD TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF A JUST PEACE.

4. OTHER EDITORIAL COMMENT IN THE PAST TWO DAYS CRITICIZED ISRAELI ACCEPTANCE OF UNIFICE DELEGATION AS A ZIONIST-IMPERIALIST TACTIC TO AVOID INTERNATIONAL CONDEMNATION OF ITS POLICIES. PRESS ALSO COMMENDED THE GREATER UNDERSTANDING IN THE WORLD OF THE ARAB CAUSE AND CONCLUDED THAT THE SARG HAS COME MUCH CLOSER TO ITS POLITICAL

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OBJECTIVE (OF ISOLATING ISRAEL).

5. WE SUSPECT THE US-SOVIET COMMUNIQUE CAUGHT THE SYRIAN PRESS AND ITS POLITICAL OVERLORDS OFF-GUARD AND THEY HAVE NOT YET DECIDED HOW TO TREAT THE STATEMENT. THE PRESS HAS PLAYED UP THE SEVERITY OF ISRAEL'S NEGATIVE REACTION ON THE FRONT PAGES, BUT HAS NOT CURTAILED EDITORIALS ON PAGE TWO HINTING AT US-ISRAELI COMPLICITY. IN ALL PROBABILITY, NEW GUIDELINES ARE IN THE WORKS ON HOW TO KEEP THE HEAT ON THE USG WHILE NOT APPEARING TO CRITICIZE THE SOVIET UNION.

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## Message Attributes

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